

of Arundel, Sussex that "hazel appears to be the first choice hereabouts of *Anagoga pulveraria*; we could manage only one from willow, whereas it was plentiful on hazel."

Steve Church (pers. comm.) reported to me a single larva of *P. pulveraria* which he found on ash *Fraxinus excelsior* at Kings Park Wood in Surrey and he has subsequently reared the species from egg to adult on ash.

A computerised literature search using the NCC Entscape data base which covers the national entomological journals and some local ones back to 1930, produced no papers referring specifically to *P. pulveraria* or synonyms so I would be interested to receive any additional information on the larval biology of this species. Several correspondents have observed that *P. pulveraria* is mainly found on ancient woodland sites and I would be interested in any views on this subject and any contradictory data. Ancient woodland sites have been defined as sites known to have had continuous cover since at least 1700 with no periods of grubbing up or ploughing in the intervening centuries (Rackham 1980).

References: Haggett, G. 1951. Autumnal moth larvae at Arundel, 1951. *Entomologist* **84**: 276-277. Rackham, O. 1980. *Ancient woodland, its history, vegetation and uses in England*. Arnold, London.— PAULWARING, Nature Conservancy Council, Northumberland House, Peterborough, PE1 1UA.

The non-feeding final instar of *Lycophotia porphyrea* (D. & S.) (Lep.: Noctuidae)

Dr Henwood's comments (*Ent. Rec.* **101**: 253) on this larva are most interesting. I have no first-hand knowledge of this species, so the suggestion that follows is pure speculation. The larvae of the Phyllocnistinae (Lep.: Gracillariidae) have a non-feeding final instar in which the mouth-parts are degenerate and a spinneret is developed for the first time (*Moths and butterflies of Great Britain and Ireland* **2**: 364). The purpose of the instar is solely to enable them to spin their cocoons prior to pupation. It is possible that *L. porphyrea* likewise undergoes a structural change of greater importance than the modification to pattern and colour.

If Dr Henwood has another opportunity to rear this species, I suggest that he compares the organs of the head-capsule before and after the final ecdysis.— A.M. EMMET, Labrey Cottage, Victoria Gardens, Saffron Walden, Essex CB11 3AF.

An early Garden Carpet.

On the morning of 7th February 1990 I was surprised to find a fresh specimen of the Garden Carpet, *Xanthorhoe fluctuata* L., flying in my kitchen in Chelmsford, Essex. Although it is tempting to suggest that the mild winter had brought this moth out in advance of its usual appearance in April, the possibility of an undiscovered pupa in the kitchen itself cannot be ignored.— C. PENNEY, 109 Waveney Drive, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 5QA.